

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 8, 2005, having a shortened statutory period for response that expired on March 8, 2006. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-16 and 23-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Contrary to the Examiner's statement, Figure 14 shows two clips (reference numbers 24) that permit attachment of a gimbal mechanism (3) to respective clamps (2), as shown in Figure 1. Further, the description at least at page 12 last paragraph, page 15 first paragraph, page 16 last paragraph, and page 21 last paragraph sets forth the relationship between the clip on the gimbal mechanism and the handle of the clamp in a manner that would have enabled the claimed invention for one skilled in the art at the time of filing the application. As described in the specification, the clip (24) of the gimbal mechanism (3) inserts into a clip-opening (12 visible in Figure 3) in a handle of the clamp (2) and slides along a slot (18 visible in Figure 3) within the handle of the clamp (2) such that the clip (24) is received into the handle. Once the clip (24) is inserted in the handle of the clamp (2), a spring (24a) formed on the clip (24) snap fixes the clip (24) into the slot (18) that has a clip lock release (13) thereby releasably linking the clamp (2) and gimbal mechanism (3). The foregoing taken from teachings in the specification demonstrates that no reasonable basis exists to question the enablement and that the disclosure, as filed, would have enabled the claimed invention for one skilled in the art at the time of filing. *See*, M.P.E.P. § 2164.05.

Examination inquiry concerns whether everything within the scope of the claim as determined by the subject matter encompassed is enabled. *See*, M.P.E.P. § 2164.08. With respect to claims that describe generically attaching the clamp to the gimbal mechanism, various ways of attaching two components together is well-known such that even if details are hypothetically omitted the description still teaches those skilled in the art how to make and use the full scope of these claims. Further, originally filed claims, such as claims 12 and 18, additionally enable the invention as claimed since a limitation

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in and of itself may enable one skilled in the art to make and use the claim containing the limitation. *See*, M.P.E.P. § 2164.

Therefore, claims 1-16 and 23-27 are enabled and in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112. In addition, new claims also contain enabled subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 23, 24, 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Jackson* (U.S. Patent No. 4,943,039). Applicants canceled claims 24, 26 and 27 without prejudice.

Claim 1 recites that a clamp has "a jaw portion and a handle portion on said lever arms, wherein a plurality of curved strengthening ribs are arrayed alternately along an inner concave surface of each said handle portion, each said rib having a convex curved surface, whereby during opening of the jaw portions, said opposing convex curved surfaces contact said inner concave surfaces and slidably guide said handle portions into mutual alignment while resisting an external torsion applied to said handle portions during said opening." Handles of clamps disclosed in *Jackson* have a smooth inner surface. Therefore, *Jackson* fails to teach, show or suggest each and every element of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Claim 23 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 25, which was not rejected in view of *Jackson*. *Jackson* fails to teach, show or suggest a gimbal means that "includes a plurality of toothed interlocks, whereby the gimbal means prevents relative movement between said first and second clamping means during an engagement of the interlocks," as recited in claim 23. Claim 23 is not anticipated by *Jackson*. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 23.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Jackson* in view of *Zera* (U.S. Patent No. 5,312,094). Claim 2 has been canceled

without prejudice. Since amendments to claim 1 include some limitations of previous dependent claim 2, Applicants traverse the rejection as it may be applied to amended claim 1.

Claim 1 recites that a clamp has "two lever arms joining each other at at least one hinge point on a plane of symmetry defined between said lever arms" with "a jaw portion and a handle portion on said lever arms, wherein a plurality of curved strengthening ribs are arrayed alternately along an inner concave surface of each said handle portion, each said rib having a convex curved surface, whereby during opening of the jaw portions, said opposing convex curved surfaces contact said inner concave surfaces and slidably guide said handle portions into mutual alignment while resisting an external torsion applied to said handle portions during said opening." As discussed with respect to the § 102 rejection, handles of clamps disclosed in *Jackson* have a smooth inner surface. *Zera* fails to overcome this deficiency in *Jackson*. Specifically, a vacuum operated clamp disclosed in *Zera* lacks handles altogether and thus cannot have a structure as recited in claim 1. As stated by the Examiner, "*Zera* teaches the use of ribs on a clamping jaw (emphasis added)," but not on a handle. Therefore, *Jackson* in view of *Zera* fails to teach, show or suggest each and every element of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the claim.

New Claims

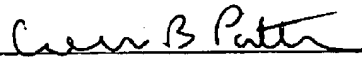
The references cited fail to teach, show or suggest a spring clamp system that includes a hand operated clamp and a positioning base coupled to the clamp and including first and second housings each with a plurality of mating formation interlocks disposed around a pivot axis, wherein the base is operable to a positive-lock position with the interlocks engaged and the clamp fixed relative to the housings and is operable to an adjustment position with the interlocks released from mating contact and the clamp moveable with the second housing about the pivot axis relative to the first housing, as recited in claim 28. Applicants submit that claim 28 and all claims dependent thereon are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of claims 28-31.

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Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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